

The Best Gift

One hundred years ago, on a farm just outside a small West Virginia town, a baby boy was born. Thirty-four years to the day, the boy, now grown and married, was presented his oldest child - a daughter. Then for his fifty-seventh birthday, he was presented with another little girl - very remarkable indeed. This time however, it was the first born daughter of his first born child.

As the little girl grew everyone could tell that, of his six grandchildren she was the one, without a doubt, who had his heart. He was a man tall and proud and of very few words. But, his gleaming face while watching her at play filled volumes without a pen.

Summer nights would be spent watching baseball games and sharing a midnight snack. Summer days she would sit on his lap as he cut the grass. If, on the event, she was being naughty, well someone else would have to catch her in the act. When she was abused he stood up for her. Even to the child he had raised.

Like all little girls must, she grew to be a teen. Sorry, but it's just not 'cool' to be "Papaw's little girl". He continued to love and look out for her every chance he got. And just the same, to stranger or friend, he would delight to tell them when she was born.

Thirty-seven years and one month to the day she was first placed in his arms he passed from this life to the next. Though grieving, yet rejoicing, the little girl ponders still. If only to have just one more time for him to put his arm around her and declare to stranger and friend alike, "this is the best birthday present I have ever received."

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